Mr. *BEDFORD's*
SERMONS
AT THE
Two Assizes
HELD AT
Bury St. Edmund's, 1698.

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Mr. BEDFORD's

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Two Assizes

HELD AT

Bury St. Edmund's, 1698.

TWO SERMONS

Preach'd at

St. *Maries* in *Bury St. Edmund's*,

AT THE

ASSIZES.

The First,

Upon the Seventh of *April* 1698, before the Honourable Sir *Thomas Rokeby* Kt. one of the Justices of His Majesty's Court of Kings-Bench.

The Second,

Upon the 16th of *August* 1698, before the Right Honourable Sir *Edward Ward* Kt. Lord Chief Baron of His Majesty's Court of Exchequer.

By *William Bedford*, Master of Arts, Rector of *Whitton* and Vicar of *Stradbrooke* and *Wingfield*.

LONDON,
Printed for *B. Wanship* at the *Ship* in *Cornhill*, 1698.

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TWO SERMONS

Preach'd at

St. Mary's in Bury St. Edmund's,

AT THE

ASSIZES.

The First,

Upon the Seventh of April 1693, before the Honourable Sir Thomas Roby Kt. one of the Justices of His Majesty's Court of Kings-Bench.

The Second,

Upon the 18th of August 1693, before the Right Honourable Sir Edward Ward Kt. Lord Chief Baron of His Majesty's Court of Exchequer.

By William Bradford, Master of Arts, Rector of Wattisfield and Vicar of Stradbrooke and Wing field.

LONDON,

Printed for S. Heyrick at the Ship in Cornhill, 1693.

To the Right Worſhipful

John Cornwallis Eſquire,

High Sheriff,

And one of the

Deputy-Lieutenants

OF THE

County of *SUFFOLK.*

SIR,

WHEN *the Grand-Juries of the County, conſiſting of ſo many Gentlemen of Honourable and Eminent Qualities, Reputation and Eſtates, (with the Approbation of my Lord Chief Baron) were both pleaſed unanimouſly to declare, That their Opinions were, It would be*

useful to the Publick that these Discourses should be Printed; I thought my self obliged to comply with their Desires: And the rather, seeing I am neither afraid nor ashamed, to give the most publick Testimony of my Fidelity to His Majesty, and Stedfastness to the true National Interests; and hereby I obtain also this occasion of expressing my Gratitude for your many Years Favours and Civilities, being,

SIR,

Your most obliged
and humble Servant,

William Bedford.

Genesis

Genesis 18. 25.

That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the Righteous with the Wicked: And that the Righteous should be as the Wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?

SO just and laudable, as well as convenient and useful, is this Practice of Justice traversing of our Counties and Provinces, and coming (as it were) home to our Habitations, that one would be apt at the first view to conjecture, that this Method had some Divine Original from God's own Example. There never was the Invention of any thing publickly beneficial to Mankind, but the Ancients ascribed it to some of their Deities; as Agriculture to *Ceres*, Physick to *Æsculapius*, and Musick to *Apollo*. Well then may we think the like of this Perambulation of Justice, the wholsom Physick of the Body Politick, the tuning of the whole Kingdom into the Musical Harmony of Peace and Concord.

I might say as St. *Bernard* saith (in the like case) of the Hierarchy of the Church, *Nec milem reputes hanc formam, quæ in terra est, exemplum habet è cœlo.*

Neither can I think this Method of administring Justice throughout our Provinces a meer Humane Devise, but I perswade my self that the Legislator that first ordained it, had seen this Pattern of it in the Mount of God, and lo, if you desire for to see it, I have found the Pattern it self in this Chapter. Here is God the great Judge of the whole Earth, going his Circuit from Heaven to the Plain of *Mamre*, and from *Mamre* to *Sodom*. This Judge comes to them to their own home, and keep his Assizes and General Goal-delivery in their own City, *v.* 21. *Descendam & videbo, the Cry of* Sodom *and* Gomorrah *is great, I will go down* my self to them, and see how it stands with them.

This Judge condemns them not unheard, but admits Counsel to plead for, and Intercessors to deprecate, as *Abraham* in the Text. So long as there lies a *Certiorari* from an higher Court, or an Appeal to an higher Court, the Case is not desperate, though the Judge should not do right; for there is a future Remedy to be hoped for. If the whole State were incensed against me, yet I can find an escape to another Country: If all the World persecute me, yet if I be an honest Man, I have a Supreme Court in my self; and I am at Peace in being acquitted by my own Conscience.

But God is the unerring Judge of all the Earth, of this which I tread upon, and this Earth which I carry about me; and when he judgeth me, my Conscience turns upon his side, and confesseth his Judgment to be right.

And therefore St. *Paul*'s Argument *Rom.* 3. ratifies and seconds *Abraham*'s Expostulation here;

Is God unrighteous? God forbid: How then ſhall God judge the World? A particular Council may err, but then a general Council may help to rectifie that particular: The King may err, but then God, in whoſe Hand the King's Heart is, can rectifie him: But if God that judgeth all the Earth, judge thee, there is no Error to be aſſigned in his Judgment, no Appeal from God not throughly informed, to God better informed, for he always knoweth all Evidence before it is given, and therefore the larger the Juriſdiction, and higher the Court is, the more careful ought the Judge to be againſt wrong Judgment; for *Abraham*'s Expoſtulation reacheth in a meaſure to them; *Shall not the Judge of all* (or of a great part of the Earth) *do right?*

This Judge, *laſtly*, comes not ſolitary or alone, but aſſociated; for in the firſt and third Verſes of this Chapter there are three of them, three Men ſtood by *Abraham*; and in the nineteenth Chapter and the firſt Verſe, at *Sodom* it ſelf where the Judgment was executed there are two of them (which is the number uſual at theſe times with us.)

There came two Angels to Sodom: A Divine Bench, an honourable Trial; whomſoever we follow of all the Chriſtian Interpreters, whether the Father generally, (as St. *Athanaſius*, St. *Ambroſe*, and *Epiphanius*) which expound theſe three to have been the three Perſons of the adored Trinity, in three Humane Shapes aſſumed: Or whither we follow ſome latter Expoſitors, (as *Calvin* and others) who make them to be the ſecond Perſon in Trinity, and two created Angels attending him.

For

For as for *Eben Ezra* and the rest of the Jews, which make all three of them Angels and meer Creatures, they are sufficiently confuted by that incommunicable Appellation of the Name *Jehovah*, which *Abraham* so often in this Chapter useth, when he speaks to them: Thus *Abraham saw the day of Christ and rejoyced*, as our Lord himself testifieth, *John* 8. 56. for so to this very Apparition some good Expositors have referred it: He saw his day indeed, he saw this day of his, he received him into his House, he feasted him, he brought him on his way, he found gracious Audience with him, as an Intercessor and Advocate for others; and all this, even then when Christ was going in his Indignation to judge *Sodom*. And in this Judgment, as in a Preludium, to shew how he will judge the whole World at the great Sessions of the last day, and visit it with the Flames of an universal Combustion.

We see then the Tribunal, and the Judge, and the Form of the Proceeding in the course of the whole Chapter: Let us come now precisely to observe the Text, and hear the Advocate *Abraham* pleading here for the Righteous, that they may not be destroyed with the Wicked; his Plea is intended principally for *Lot*, who was his Nephew dear to him, and that lived amongst the *Sodomites*; 'tis intended secondarily, for all righteous Persons, if any other such peradventure were living there: And in the last place, in a commendable Compassion he would have been glad also if it might have been extended to the whole City, and to so many Thousands

ſands of Perſons as now were about periſhing in it; *Far be that from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* Which words naturally point out their own diviſion, conſiſting apparently of two parts.

The firſt is, a Deteſtation or Averſation, *Far be that from thee.*

The other is, a Reaſon, a Motive, an Ætiology, *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?*

In the Deteſtation again, which firſt offers it ſelf unto us, there are two things; the Subject of it, and the Degree of it; the Subject deteſted in the word *it* or *that*, *Far be that from thee.*

The Degree of the Deteſtation is twofold, *Gradus ſimplex*, the plain Degree, *be it from thee*; and *Gradus auctus*, or *Gradus cum adjectione*, the emphatical Degree, *be it far from thee.* And firſt I will ſpeak of theſe.

The Subject of the Deteſtation is expreſſed relatively, *that* or *it*, *far be it from thee*; and ſo points us back to that which is paſſed already in the former part of the Verſe, namely, *to ſlay the righteous with the wicked*: *far be that from thee.* So that here is a Suppoſition of *Abraham*'s and a Poſition, the Suppoſition is, That the Wicked no doubt are to be ſlain, and to be deſtroyed by the Magiſtrate: And no marvel that this is put *extra Controverſiam*, and taken for granted; for what Herbaliſt doth not root up noiſom Weeds? Or what Chyrurgeon doth not cut away all corrupt and putrified Fleſh? *Betimes will I root out all wicked doers from the City of the Lord* (ſaith the Royal Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 101. 8.) *Immedicabile vulnus enſe recidendum eſt, ne pars ſincera*

cera trahatur, saith the Poet. What are the Wicked
Cant. 2. 2. but Thorns, and what are Thorns but for the Fire?
Psal. 1. 4. What are they but Chaff, and what is the Chaff for, but to be severed from the Corn, and blown away of the Wind: A Seditious Disturber of the publick Peace, is a most noxious and Savage wild Beast, saith the Orator, and if it fall into a Pit, let it be overwhelmed there, and come out no more, least it do more hurt. It was with good Signification, that the Roman Magistrates caused to be borne before them *Fascès cum securibus*, Rods and Axes both, whom the Rod corrects not, him the Axe chops off.

I take this therefore for granted, as *Abraham* doth, the Wicked are to be destroyed: And I come from his Supposition to his Position, The Righteous nevertheless must not be destroyed with them for company: If it falls out so that the Wicked cannot be cut down, unless the Righteous also perish joyntly with them; even the Wicked rather are to be spared for the present, *Far be it from thee, to slay the righteous with the wicked.* 'Tis well this Plea can be in *Sodom*, here is some Comfort for us, worth our taking up by the way, the World shall never be so bad, but there may be some hope of finding some Righteous, even in those places which
Joshua 6. are worst; in *Sodom* there was a *Lot*, in *Jericho* a
Rev. 3. 4. *Rahab*, in *Sardis* a few Names which had not de-
1 Kings 18. 3. filed their Garments. In *Ahab*'s Court a good *Obadiah*; in infamous *Nero*'s Family, *Christians* and *Saints*, Phil. 4. 22. The Devil hath but sowed
Matt. 13. 25. Tares amongst the Wheat, he could not so root the

the Corn it self out, but that in every Field God will have some Wheat. 'Tis a most true Axiom in the Schools, *Malum non potest existere nisi in bono*, Evil cannot exist or be, but in something which is good; and therefore cannot wholly eat out and destroy all Good.

And here is a Caution also for those who have the Sword of Judicature and Authority in their Hands: Be wise ye that are Judges of the Earth, pre-judge not a Man wholly by his Place, nor yet by his Company; though the Clamours of the Sins of a Place in general, be as the Clamour and the Cry of *Sodom*; yet *descendite & videte*, look into it nearer, and distinguish of particulars.

In *Sodom* there was a *Lot*; amongst *Joseph*'s malicious Brethren there was a *Reuben* that dissuaded the Murther of the Child; with the Robbers that were justly Crucified, there was a guiltless Jesus. Even out of *Nazareth*, in despight of the Jewish Proverb, *John* 1. 46. there may come something which is good: In one and the same Goal there may be as well as some Malefactors, some that are as unjustly suspected. In one and the same Indictment, there may be some Nocent and some Innocent. Gen. 27. 22. Luke 23. 47.

But I touch upon these Matters only by the way, but will insist upon the Proposition it self which *Abraham* lays down here, *The Righteous must not be destroyed with the Wicked; he which slays the Righteous with the wicked*, saith *Abraham*, *to him the righteous are as the wicked, but that must not be, far be that from thee.*

And ſure it is an invincible Argument, for how foul Injuſtice is it, *Tam in æqualibus æqualia tribuere*, to deal alike with Perſons ſo unlike. How horrible an Exorbitancy were it, that they ſhould be all one in our Valuation, whom ſo many and unſpeakable Differences have diſtinguiſhed in their own Conditions; I mean the Righteous and the Wicked, their own Intentions which they ſhoot at diſtinguiſh them, the one aims at direct Honeſty and heavenly Piety; the other, at baſe Profit and earthly Pleaſure; their Principles which they go by diſtinguiſh them, the one meaſures his Actions by the publick Good, the other by his private; their Fruits redounding to the Common-wealth do diſtinguiſh them; the one are *pacis reipublicæ*, and the other *facis*; their choice of converſing doth diſtinguiſh them, they come not at each other. The poſitive Laws of Men diſtinguiſh them, they appoint Reward for the one, but Puniſhments for the other.

Chriſt's Judgment doth diſtinguiſh them, he will ſet the one at his right Hand, the other at his Left; the place of their eternal Habitation doth diſtinguiſh them, for the one Heaven is prepared, for the other Hell: In one word, from Eternity they were differenced, and to Eternity they ſhall be: They ſtrove in the Womb like *Rebecca*'s Twins; and like the Smoak of *Eteocles* and *Polynices*, when they are dead, they will have no Union; and ſhall then *the righteous be as the wicked?* If that be not *in æqualibus æqualia tribuere*, what is? Shall there be no difference of a Son and of a Slave? of a Friend and of an Enemy? of a dutiful Subject and

and a plotting Traytor? All other Differences have been reconciled, the Fair *European* and Foul *Negro* marry and live together; Fire and Water meet in the Ingrediency of the mix'd body, Light and Darkness concur in one *Crepuſculum*, one dawning of the day; but this diametrical Oppoſition of Righteous and Wicked, hath been and ſtill is at Diſcord, it could never be pacified; *A wicked Man is an Abomination to the Juſt, and he that is upright in his way, is an Abomination to the wicked.*

When I conſider therefore, that *Abraham* brings this as a Fundamental Axiom indiſputable, that *the righteous muſt not be ſlain with the wicked*; and that *they muſt not be unto us as the wicked*; and when I weigh the Reaſon of it, I am amazed to think of that ſhameful Lapſe of the good Emperor *Theodoſius*, who upon the account of the private Actions of ſome mutinous Perſons in *Theſſalonica*, ſent his Army upon the City, and promiſcuouſly ſlew the Innocent with the Guilty.

It would make one tremble to think of ſuch an erroneous Mandate; but it is enough to overwhelm any conſidering Perſon with Horrour and Amazement, to call to mind the Domeſtick Example of that Infernal Direction of the Romiſh Traytor Father *Garnet*, who being not a Military Prince, but an Eccleſiaſtick profeſſing Peace, not an illiterate rude Souldier, but a Clerk of elaborate Education, not on a ſudden Rage unpremeditated, but upon Deliberation more fully adviſed, ſhould warrant a more Barbarous Reſolution, for being asked by the Popiſh Conſpirators of the Gunpowder Treaſon, *Whither it was lawful for them*

to destroy in our Parliament House many good Men for Company with more bad, (that is, such as were their Favourers with such as were not) answered, *Yea, it was*, Si in grande emolumentum Ecclesiæ Romanæ cessurum sit, *so it might bring evident Advantement and Benefit to the Roman Church.*

If this Oracle did come (as there are good grounds to believe it did) from the then Possessor of the Apostolical Chair at *Rome*, he was but a painted Wall, and Vice-Demon upon Earth: Doth he claim to be Judge of all the World, and doth he command *the righteous to be slain with the wicked?* I am sure that Judge of all the World, with whom *Abraham* here conferreth, is of other Sentiments, unless he will take a spice of Manicheism, and make two Judges of all the World; one good one, which must needs be God, and another evil, which must be the Devil.

But I must not, like another *Tarquinius*, strike off the tops only of the tallest Poppies, tax none but only the Emperor *Theodosius*, and the Romish Pontifex *Maximus*; but the truth is, there are few Men living, of what Condition or Quality soever, but one time or other, more or less, offend against this Rule, and make *the righteous as the wicked.*

And to comprize it summarily, four ways it may be done:

First, By indiscreet Pitty.
Secondly, By preposterous Zeal.
Thirdly, By Atheistical Neglect.
Fourthly, By diabolical Malice.

These

of these I will very briefly treat of. *First*, It is done by indiscreet Pitty, when we are so childishly Compassionate, that we destroy not them that are incorrigibly Wicked; when like *Joash* the King of *Israel*, we smite but thrice at *Aram*, whereas we ought for to smite five or six times till they were consumed; when like *Ahab* we let go *Benhadad*, the Man appointed for to die, whom God hath delivered into our Hands; when we find Manslaughter for Willful Murther, and with-hold the Hand of Justice from them, which with-hold not the Hand of Violence from their Brethren; this is to make *the righteous as the wicked*, for it gives the Wicked the priviledge of Indemnity, which should be peculiar to the Righteous; yea, and more than so, by sparing the Wicked, consequently it destroys the Righteous, it leaves that Serpentine Brood, which will be in the end the Destruction of them.

2 Kings 13.19.

1 Kings 20.42.

Secondly, By Prepostrous Zeal, we make *the Righteous as the Wicked*; when we are too furiously hot upon the spur, when we hasten so to abolish the Wicked, that necessarily we involve the Righteous in the same Ruin, when we are more precipitant than *Jehu* himself, that was so furious a Driver; for he would not let loose his armed Men upon the Priests of *Baal*, till he had taken order effectually that there was no Servant of the Lord *Jehovah* left amongst them. God himself, to shew that he would ever discriminate the Righteous from the Wicked, he would not bring the Deluge (*Gen.* 7. 23.) upon the World of the Ungodly,

2 Kings 10.23.

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Ungodly, till he saw that *Noah* was entered into the Ark: Nor would he send the destroying Angel over *Egypt*, till he knew that the Houses of the
Exod. 12. 23. Children of *Israel* were sprinkled with the Paschal Blood. Neither would he suffer the Tares in the Gospel (*Matt.* 13. 29.) to be plucked up before the Harvest, lest the Wheat also should miscarry with them. Vice must not be stabbed through the Loines of Vertue, as in a condemned Woman pleading Pregnancy, our merciful Laws worthily expect the Delivery of her Innocent Child. *Let* Rahab *and her Family be brought safe out, and then let* Jericho *be destroyed.*

Thirdly, We make *the Righteous like the Wicked*, by Atheistical Neglect, when we equally regard neither; when if Gain so invite us, we promiscuously oppress both: Like that Popish Army which having taken a City mixedly inhabited by Protestants and Papists, put them all indifferently to the Sword, because they would finger the whole Spoil; and when those of their own Popish Superstition fell at their Knees and cried, *We are Catholicks*; they answered, *The better for your Souls*; and that was all the Courtesie that they shewed them.

Fourthly, It is done by Diabolical Malice, when Men are at a Defiance with God, and take their Pay in the Camp of Lucifer, when the Righteous are the Mun of their Hatred, and they purposely set themselves to destroy them, but to spare the Wicked. When they cry of Murtherous *Barabbas*, *Let*

Let him have his Pardon; but of the Holy Jesus, *Crucifie him, Crucifie him.* The Righteous are then not only as the Wicked, but in a much worse case than the Wicked. *Abraham* desired that they might be better than they, but here they may be glad if they may be but as they. So as of old *Aristides* must have the Ostracism, and be banished for his Justness, *Nemo apud nos frugi sit, nemo excellat, aut si excellerit abeat.* The *Ephesians*, when they banished a worthy Person, were not ashamed to proclaim the Reason, because they would have no Man to excel above the rest; if any Man would be better than others, let him pack away from their Dominions. But I hope no such vain and unequal Dealings will be countenanced in our times, this were to make the appearance of Goodness more prejudicial than the Evidence and Conviction of Evil. Such Practices ought to be far from us,

What I have already spoken, shall suffice for a cursory Declaration of the ways whereby we do make *the Righteous as the Wicked*; of all which four kinds we must say as *Abraham* here saith unto God, *Far be they from us*; all of them must be the due subjects of our Abomination and detesting Aversation; in special indeed Injustice, but in general all Sin and Vice; which our Gracious King, as the true Vice-gerent of God, is now endeavouring to root out, that God may continue to protect this Nation, living in a Course of Righteousness, as he hath done already above our Deserts.

Thus

Thus having finiſhed the Abhorrence or Abomination *to ſlay the Righteous with the Wicked*, or to eſteem *the Righteous as the Wicked, be it from thee, yea, be it far from thee.* The former, the plain Degree, *be it from thee*, Injuſtice eſpecially; in general, all Iniquity; *be it all from thee.*

Here we may ſee the vile Condition of Sin and Impiety; no Commerce can it have with God; no Union with his Nature; no Abode or Footing in his Preſence; it may ſay like Vagabond *Cain*, *Gen.* 4. 14. *Behold, thou haſt driven me out this day from the face of the Earth; and from thy face ſhall I be hid, and I ſhall be a Fugitive and a Vagabond in the Earth: and it ſhall come to paſs, that every one that findeth me, ſhall ſlay me.* And we need no reaſon of this Sentence of perpetual Exile, *Be it from thee*, theſe three words, *it from thee*, are a moſt compleat Reaſon; *it*, which is Miſery; *from thee*, which art Bleſſedneſs; *it*, which is Death; *from thee*, which art Life it ſelf; *it*, which is Uncleanneſs; *from thee*, which art Purity; *it*, which is Crookedneſs; *from thee*, which art Rectitude; *it*, which is Darkneſs; *from thee*, which art Light it ſelf: A thouſand Volumes compiled by never ſo *Ciceronian* a Pen, a thouſand Tongues of Men and Angels, could not more graphically paint out the Curſedneſs of Sin and Injuſtice as theſe three words have done, *It from thee*, it is baniſhed from God, the Idea of Goodneſs, the Center and the Circumference of Perfection; and when it is ſaid to be baniſhed from God, we muſt conceive it alſo (for our own Inſtruction) baniſhed from all which any way partake either of the Nature or Name

of God, from all Judges first, for so the Scripture saith of them, *Dixi Dii estis*, I have said ye are Gods, yea, universally from all Men; for Man is in a true Sense *pars Dei*, a piece of God, and therefore Sin ought not to be harboured in us. *In God we live, move, and have our Beings.* David saith, That God made Man a little lower than the Angels; the word will beare, A little lower than God: And indeed our Souls and Bodies are the very Characters of the Divine Image. Our Understanding, Will and Memory, are the *Vestigia*, the Characters of the Divine Trinity; and our Humane Nature born of the Blessed Virgin, hath personal Union with the eternal Word. These things plainly evince, that we have some Participation of the Divine Nature, and that the Regenerate partake of the same Spirit with God; and therefore this, *Be it farre from thee*, must take place with us also. *Be it from God*, and from all that partake of the Nature and the Name of God.

I have done with the *Gradus simplex*, the plain Degree; but *Abraham* contents not himself thus, he adds, *Gradum auctum, Gradum cum adjectione*, the emphatical Degree, *Be it far from thee*, and he adds this when he speaks to God, not to wish a thing that is not, but to express and acknowledge a thing that is.

The Truth is, there is none but God, of whom we can properly say, that Sin is far from him: A Creature may be actually free from Sin, and so Sin may be absent from it; but it is not far absent from it, as it is said to *Cain, Sin lieth at the door.* Gen. 4. 7.

Every rational Creature hath a Door, whereby it may let in Sin, a possibility of being depraved and embracing it; but only the eternal God he hath no door, whereby he can let in Sin, his Nature hath an infinite Repugnancy and Incompatibility with it; an Angel may Sin, and yet remain an Angel; a Man may Sin, and yet remain a Man; but God cannot have Sin in him and remain God; it cannot consist with his Essence, and therefore far it is indeed from him, and far be that Blasphemous Doctrine from us, to make God the Author of any Sin; he cannot be the subject of Sin in himself, nor can he be the Efficient of Sin in others.

Therefore let us enforce our selves to a Sacred Emulation of God's glorious Prerogatives as far as may be; let not only Sin be from us, *in gradu simplici*, but *in gradu actus*, let it be far from us; there cannot be too great a distance between us and it, *ratione contagii*, in regard of the Contagiousness of it, there cannot be too great a distance, if we flee not from it, it will infect us. 'Tis like a Basilisk, it kills as far as it can be seen, 'tis like a Fire, it enchases as far as it can be heard. 'Twere good that there were a Rest-house for the Wicked, as there is for them that have the Plague, a *Thracian Bosphorus* where they might live by themselves, and have no access to other Men to Poyson them; for it is not enough for us not to approach to them, but they will approach to us. Again, *Ratione suppicii*, in regard of the Punishment of it, there cannot be too great a distance, though we practice it not our selves, if

we be but in company of them that practice it; if they be in our Houses, if they be in our Towns, we fare the worse for them; for one *Achan* the whole Army of *Israel* flies before their Enemies. Sin was committed on the Earth by *Adam*, and the very Heavens felt the Smart of it; there were malignant Influences then added to those Cœlestial Bodies, which had not at the first been created in them.

If Sin get a footing in our Servants, in our Followers, 'tis like an Enemy that hath got a Sconce, or a Cittadel, too near us, from thence it will Gall us too; and therefore when it offers to come and dwell with us, we must answer it as *Tully* answers *Catiline* in the like case, *Nullo modo iisdem in parietibus tute esse possumus, qui magno in periculo sumus, quod iisdem in manibus versemur.* Far be it from us.

I have dwelt long enough upon the Aversation, *Far be it from thee*; I will not therefore long detain this Honourable Assembly, but recompence it with as much brevity in this other which follows, the Reason or Ætiology, *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* In which words take notice briefly of two things.

First, The Perfection of Judges; and then the Judge of Perfection. Here you may observe a Judge *in abstracto*, what it is; and *in concreto*, where or in whom it is.

First, Take notice of the Perfection of a Judge, *in abstracto*, what it is: It is to do Equity and Right. That is the End and Scope of all Judges, and of all Judgments; that is the Pole-star of all Judicial Actions; Shall not he do Right who is ordained to that end, to decide Controversies of Right and Wrong? Shall not a Judge do Right?

You have heard the Perfection of a Judge *in abstracto*, what it is; there remains the Perfection of a Judge *in concreto*, where or in whom it is; 'tis not every where, nay, 'tis no where but in God. Absolute Perfection is the incommunicable Property of the Deity, all created Natures, *Tantum abest ut Perfectione, quantum ab Divinitate*, but in God there is Absolute Perfection. Negative Questions in this kind in Scripture, pre-suppose always Affirmative Answers, *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do Right?* Yes, he will do it, do it others, or do they not, this Judge will do it.

So that God is there described a perfect Judge in two respects.

First, In the Extent of his Jurisdiction; and in the Exercise of it.

In the Extent of it, He is a Judge of all the Earth. In the Exercise of it, He will do Right, he cannot but do Right; *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do Right?*

The

The Extent of his Jurisdiction is the whole Earth; 'tis not a Country or two that confine his Circuit; 'tis not a Province or two that bound his Empire; he scorneth to borrow a Title as the Old *Romans* did, from one or two Conquered Nations, *Sarmaticus*, *Geticus*, *Numidicus*, he hath that which others long for, and cannot have, *Catholicus*, *Oecumenicus*. He needs no *plus ultra*, as that *Charlemagn* who confuted his rich Title with his craving Motto, for all the whole Universe is his. There is none therefore so weak here, but if he be Oppressed, sees an higher Tribunal that he may fly unto. There is none so strong here, so armed with Authority and Favour, but if he be an Oppressor, he sees a Tribunal that he may fear. No wonder that *Felix* trembled when he heard St. *Paul* dispute of this Judgment, and of this Judge. From all other Courts there lies an Appeal to him, but from him there lies no Appeal to any other. There is a Commission, against which no Prohibition can be brought; we must not come there with our *Nemo bis judicabitur de eodem, bis judicabimur de isdem*; all Causes that have been heard in this World, shall be heard again in that Prerogative-Court of Heaven; and what was right adjudged here, shall be ratified there; and what was wrong adjudged here, shall be repealed there. And finally, What was never heard here at all, yet shall be decisively ordered there.

I will

I will shut up my Discourse in a few words, (which it becomes me to say) to demonstrate, that the Supream Judge of Heaven and Earth will ever do Right, (according to the Conclusion of the Text) doth most undeniably appear, with relation to the Church of *England*, (as it is by Law established) in whose Cause he hath been pleased of late to manifest his Power and Goodness most remarkably; and not only in our Days, but he hath done the like in former Ages; for in respect of its Doctrine, Discipline and External Rites, he guided the solid Foundation thereof, by that admirable young Prince King *Edward* the Sixth, and supported it by the Soundness of the Magnanimous Princess Queen *Elizabeth*, who (during all her long and glorious Reign) would never admit of any Alterations; no, not in the very Out-works, the External Rites thereof, (which are Securities to the main Fortress of our Religion) though she was frequently solliciced thereunto by Men of great Fame and Judgment; and though in the 34th Article of our Church it is owned, That the External part of its Worship may admit of Alterations (by publick Authority) upon Emergent Causes, and for Reasons demonstrably and apparently tending to the Publick Good; and when Times and Mens Manners do require it.

And this Church hath been since adorned by the Piety and Devout Practice of the late Virtuous and Blessed Queen *Mary*, (who, by the Countenance and Consent of King *Charles* the Second,

was

was most happily Married to His Present Majesty, notwithstanding all the Secret Opposing Intrigues of the Renegado Jesuits:) which Famous Princess lived and dyed in all the Observances of this Church like a Primitive Saint.

And it has been not only dignified by the high Respect borne toward it by these two eminent Princesses, who set two such Examples as are hardly imitable by the very best and bravest of Womenkind; but it was defended and cherished by the Learning and peaceful Temper of King *James* the First, and by the Piety of Queen *Anne*. And it hath been exceedingly honoured and embellished by the Constancy, Patience and Charity of the Devout Martyr King *Charles* the First.

And thus stood it out against all Assaults, during the Reign of all our Princes since the Reformation. (Queen *Maries* short Reign, and part of the twenty Years of our Unhappy Civil Wars, and foolish Anarchical Governments excepted.) after which it was re-established in course of Law upon the wonderful and peaceable Restauration of King *Charles* the Second, who at his death left it upon its own Establishment.

But as to two other Princes that have possessed the Throne (since the Reformation) Queen *Mary* the First, and the late King *James* the Second, they both were pleased to give it publick, high and kind Characters at their first Accessions to their Crowns; and whilst the Men of our Communion were busily fixing them into their Royal

Authorities,

Authorities; and the latter of them, did for some considerable number of Years, outwardly comply with its Observances; (so long as the Polititians of the Court of *Rome* would suffer him) but their deep Engagements and Confederacies with the *Romans* Party, would not admit them for to countenance it further, and that they openly declined Communion with it, should be no Argument for any Protestant upon Earth to dislike its Constitution, but the rather to embrace and support it.

How Queen *Maries* Severities increased, *Gentlemen*, your *Suffolk* Ancestors soon felt; and if it had not been for the seasonable Rescue of King *William*, we might long before this time have Sorrowfully felt also, how King *James* would have increased; had not King *William* delivered this Church out of all its Imminent and Surprizing Perils; and secured it by his Valour, Policy and Indefatigable Vigilance (exerted both in the Fatigues of the Field, and the Management of the Treaty) and with the Security thereof he hath superadded the ancient Lustre to the Realm of *England*, of becoming once more the Ballance to all the Publick Affairs of *Europe*.

And he hath pleased to espouse it for his Grand and Professed Design, to endeavour to Found us such a Settlement, as may secure both our Religious and Civil Rights to our Posterities.

And towards all these he hath made as vigorous Attempts, as the Policy, Resolution and Integrity

of

of the most Heroick of our Princes, or the Bravest of Men can parallel.

Therefore we have the highest Obligation to follow that Example of the Grateful *Israelites* towards King *Solomon*, recorded in 1 *Kings* 8. 66. (with with I shall conclude.)

> *To Praise God, and to Pray daily for the long Life and Grandeur of the King; and to return to our Houses joyful and glad of Heart, for all the Goodness that the most righteous God hath shewed unto his Anointed, and unto us his People.*

The Second Sermon.

Zechariah 7. 9, 10.

Thus ſpeaketh the Lord of Hoſts, ſaying, Execute true Judgment, and ſhew Mercy and Compaſſion every Man to his Brother. And oppreſs not the Widow, nor the Fatherleſs, the Stranger, nor the Poor, and let none of you imagine Evil againſt his Brother in your Heart.

MY Song ſhall be now, as *David*'s was, of *Mercy* and *Judgment*. *Judgment* and *Mercy* are the proper Subjects for this time, in which *Righteouſneſs* and *Peace* will the moſt gracefully kiſs each other.

The liberty of the Goſpel hath no way abrogated the Morality of the Law, for *Chriſt came not to deſtroy, but to fulfil it*: So that this Precept

of executing *true Judgment and Merty*, is not at all excluded from the Doctrine of the Son of God, but he ratifies the Commands of his Father, saying, *Judge not according to the Appearance, but judge righteous Judgment.*

John 7. 24.

The Nature of this Judgment is either Political or Moral; Political, as being proper to a Supreme Governour, and his Subordinate Magistrates; or Moral, as implying an Equity between Private Men; whereby every Man is bound, both by the Law of God and Nature, to shew Mercy and Compassion towards his dejected Brother. By the Law of God, because he so commands; by the Laws of Men, because we are all the Sons of *Adam*. Therefore *execute true Judgment, and shew Mercy.*

It will be a proper Introduction to the rest, that I speak generally (though briefly) of Judgment in a Politick State: *Jethro* the Father-in-Law of *Moses*, sets forth a President of a righteous Judge, according to the Qualities which he ought for to be endued with, saying, *Thou shalt provide out of all the People, able Men, such as fear God, Men of Truth, hating Covetousness, and place such to be Rulers over them.* Able Men, or Men of Courage and Wisdom; they must be Industrious, able to dispatch and expedite Causes, *Valentes Ingenio*, Men of ready Wit and Dexterity.

Exod. 18. 21.

Secondly,

Secondly, Constancy and Strength are requisite, lest they quit a good Cause for fear of the Mighty; those that have not an adequate Power derived upon them, are dangerously Ambitious of such a Dignity: Therefore said the Wise Man, *Seek not to be a Judge, being not able to take away Iniquity, lest at any time thou fear the Person of the Mighty, and lay a Stumbling-block in the way of thy Uprightness.*

Thirdly, They must be Men of Estate as well as of Power, of eminent Birth and Estimation; therefore *Moses* in the Fifteenth of *Deuteronomy*, took the chief of the Tribes, Wise Men and known, and made them Heads over the People.

Our Modern Polititians therefore affirm, *Futius divites quam pauperes in Magistratum elegantur.* And they must be Men fearing God, that being the Foundation of all Virtue: Besides, if Men of Might fear not God, when in regard of their great and publick Power, they fear not Men, they are apt to fall into many Outrages; but it behoveth him that judgeth others, to have an exact respect unto his Superor Judge, to whom he must give an account of all his Acts; let them look unto God in whose stead they are.

They must be Men of Truth, both understanding the Truth, that they may distinguish right from wrong: And also Followers of the Truth in their Will and Practise; for there is a Speculative Truth, in Discerning and Judging; and a Practicable

Practicable Truth, in following a right Judgment.

They must seek out the Truth by Witnesses, Writings and Evidences, and having found it out, give Judgment accordingly: And they must be Constant, and not changeable in their Sentences and Decrees; and they must have Covetousness, be so far from that meanness of Spirit, as to have an Abhorrence of it.

God who commands others to do Justice, is pleased for to shew the highest Example thereof in himself; in him there is nothing Unjust or Evil, as Coldness hath no place in Fire, nor Blackness in Snow, nor Obscurity in the Sun, no more hath Sin any place in God, nor should it have any shelter or countenance from Men.

This prescribed Traytor of our Prince, This Out-law'd Fugitive of our Sovereign, should not be found harboured with them: God hath put the Sword into the Magistrates hand to punish, and he expects that he should not bear it in vain, Execution is the Life of the Law; the Execution is as necessary as the Promulgation. He that hath Authority, and punisheth not Disorders in others, is consequentially guilty of them himself: But they must not punish more than the Offence, that is too much; and to punish less, makes but Offenders Insolent and Mukitudinous.

Justice is *Columna & corona reipublicæ*, it is the Cement which holds the general parts of the Body Politick

Politick together, it is as the Nerves and Sinews thereof, and by it the Throne is eſtabliſhed.

Judges are *Juris indices*, they are *Jus dicere* and *Jus dare*, if they do not, then is the Law weakened and perverted, and made to patronize Evil, and Wickedneſs is committed under Authority, and the Law doth turn its edge againſt the Innocent; and that which ſhould be a Defence, becomes a Maze of Briars and Thorns, and the Rod of Juſtice is turned into a Serpent of Subtilty.

And ſo it is, if the Jurors give not a ſound Verdict, but make the worſt ſide to ſeem the beſt; this were to be wiſe to do Evil, and not *verum dicere*, as their Office ſignifies. In Juſtice we are not to reſpect Perſons (though that be commanded otherwhere, yet it is forbidden here) here the Cauſes are to be heard, more than the Parties obſerved; the Equity of Cauſes is to be weighed, not the Quality of Perſons; if otherwiſe, it makes the Law but like Spiders Webs, in which the ſmall Flies are ſtrangled, whilſt the great ones eſcape and break through. Hence haughty ſucceſsful Robbers wear Chains of Gold, whilſt poor Pilferers are bound with Fetters of Iron.

The taking of Gifts is a ſecret Preventer of Juſtice, it makes Men to over-ſee God's Laws and the King's; undermines and devours the Houſes of the poor Widow and the deſolate Orphan; theſe blind the Eyes of the Wiſe, and ſtop the

Mouths

Mouths of the Skillful: To ſome Perſons the greateſt Evidence is not half ſo convincing as a ſecret Gift; though where Right is, there is the great Point.

It is no wonder that good Cauſes fall not out well, if many Hands be open to receive Gifts.

It is no wonder if the Evidence of the Witneſſes be ſtrained and diverted; but let ſuch conſider, what meaſure they meet, ſhall at the laſt be meaſured unto them again; not only by God's Judgment hereafter; but upon the Obſervance of his righteous Vicegerents, this Retribution will overtake them in this Life to their Shame and Sorrow.

Let not thoſe therefore that ſhould be the Supporters of others be their Supplanters; but let Juſtice and Equity be ſo exactly obſerved, that the Voice of Fraud may be no more heard amongſt us; when the Contentious Violence of Men did overflow the Banks of Right, then would God have the Law take ſtrength to it ſelf, to curb Mens fiery Paſſions and Attempts: To this end Judges and Officers of the Law were appointed to ſee the Laws impartially executed, without wreſting or extorting: This is the end of the Law, the Office of the Judge, and the Occaſion of this time.

The Charge of the Judicial Office is great, therefore to him that gives the Charge, a Charge is given of God, *Thou ſhalt not wreſt Judgment*; thou

thou shalt not respect Persons, nor take a Gift, for the Judgment is not only before Men, but before God also.

If they that sit in Judgment prospect him that judgeth all the Earth, in the exactness of his Judgment, and follow it, their Integrity will grow Proverbial, Like the Judgment of *Bothorio*, or the Sentence of *Bias*; he that thus setteth him before his Eyes, shall never fear what *Cambyses* the *Persian* made *Othones* to do, *Se summum excoriavit, & filium ejus Othonem corio insidere coegit*: For he hath here a great Terror and Restraint; he knoweth that God standeth in the Congregation of the Judges.

But a People so wisely Zealous of their Laws and Liberties (as the *English*) will not be easily imposed upon; and such Sages of the Laws as we have, that administer so exactly, need not any such tremendous Memorials.

As in the Pallace of the *Ottoman Emperor*, four of the most Honourable Bassa's sit in Judgment in the great Hall, and the Grand Seignior himself, through a secret Window, unheard and unseen, hears the Complaints of his People, and the Sentences of his Judges: So is our Great God conscious unto all that Men do here, in their Deputations under him; they must therefore remember that no Greatness can exempt them from his high Censure, when they willingly corrupt themselves.

The *Egyptians* of old would not suffer the Bodies of their Kings to have Royal Interments, till

till their Lives were scan'd, by a severe Examination of their Management of the Regal Scepter whilst they had it; and as that was approved, their Funeral Honours were augmented or diminished; shewing that all Earthly Greatness hath an undoubted account, whereunto it is liable and stoopeth after Death.

And Blessed is he who so judgeth here, as that his Judgment may be approved by that Judge there, he which putteth so all Injustice far from him, and truly distinguisheth between the Righteous and the Wicked, shall be absolved by that Great Lord, whose Servants he himself absolveth, and whose Enemies he condemneth. Blessed is this Judge as to himself, and Blessed are the People over whom he presideth.

It is the Judges Business and Profession to do Right; therefore the *Egyptian* Hieroglyphick painted him without Hands, with his Eyes almost shut, and from his Neck a Saphire hanging down, with this word *Veritas* engraven upon it. He must have no Hands for Bribes, no Eyes for Sinister Respects, or to respect Persons.

To the same purpose the Image of *Jupiter* was made in *Crete* without Ears: He must have no Ears to hear impiously against Justice.

The *Areopagites* for the same cause never sate to Judgment in the Day, but in the Night-time and by an obscure Light, that they might not be moved by Apparel, Habits, Gestures or Countenances of the Persons summoned before them: And surely Injustice, though it be a Blemish

to

to any Man, yet it is not half so much a Blemish to another Man as to a Judge; distastful it is in any, but most of all in him.

And if Right be thus the Pole-star of all Judges in their Judicial Actions, we must conceive it to be so too in all others, in their Actions Subordinate to Judicial; yea, we must give it the due Extent of it.

If the Judge must Decree right, the Accuser also must Object right, the Witness must Testifie right, the Learned Counsellor must Plead right, and the Jury must Find right. *Ultimus finis dat mediis ordinem & mensuram*, all these will be Planetical sometimes, and have the proper Motions of their own Sphere, the Plaintiff is hot and fiery like *Mars*; the Defendant is Sullen and Froward like *Saturn*, the Advocate is Crafty and Wily like *Mercury*, the Witness is Variable and Changeable like *Luna*; but the Judge, like to the highest Orb of the Heavens, must over-rule all these inferior Spheres of the Planets, and carry them all along in his own diurnal Motion with himself.

But especially the Advocate must be looked into, that he may not too lightly dispense with himself, he thinks, though others are bound to the Right, yet he may Sophisticate and plead wrong: but Equity and Right is the Scope that he ought to aim at; if he will not give Right an helping hand, he should give it none at all.

The general Calling of a good Christian, is presupposed in all particular Callings. A Souldier must live by Fighting, but not in fighting a wicked

Quarrel; and he that Pleads should live honourably by it, but not in bolstering Oppressions against the Orphan and the Widow.

St. *Tertullian* in his Book of Idolatry, condemns all those Christians most deeply, who being Carvers, Painters, or Embroiderers, would do any Work whatsoever which had the least and remotest Subordination to the decking of an Heathen Idol.

It were a goodly matter if the Pilot should be bound to arrive at (or steer to) the right Haven, and the Oar-men be permitted to row towards the wrong: 'Twere a pretty devise, if the Captain were tied to lead the Army to the place of right Service, and the Sentinels have license to mis-inform him: And what were it then, if the Judge were enjoyned to award the true Sentence, and the Advocate be suffered to patronize the false.

The famous Civilian *Papinianus*, rather than he would defend the Emperor *Caracalla's* barbarous Murther of his Brother, willingly admitted of death under that bloody Tyrant.

And which you will more wonder at, the no less famous *Cyrillus* in his Age, he would never be brought by Favour or Fear, so much as to draw a Conveiance of any of those Lands, which *Anthony* and his Fellow-Triumvirs had given away in the Oppression of the Roman Liberties.

Famous may the Memory be of such Spirits, and long may the like flourish, and deterr or ashame our Advocates from supporting corrupt Causes for large Fees: For their Pleadings ought

 not

not to be considered as Sophisters Acts, tending to the Ostentation and Exercise of Wit, but are serious and important Proceedings, that ought to aim totally at Equity and Right.

But the Text seemeth to require me to speak something of the Moral Equity that ought to be betwixt private Persons: And that this may be more exercised, I will with the Prophet wish you by way of intreaty, to *Execute true Judgment*, *Lex talionis*, the Law of like for like is of great Antiquity, common as well with the *Gentiles* by the Law of Nature, as with the *Jews* by the Law of God, whereby we are taught not to use others as we would not be used our selves; to which accords that of our Blessed Saviour, *Whatsoever you would that Men should do unto you, even so do unto them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

In these Admonitions we are taught *Mercy and Compassion* when we have our Adversary in a straight, and to forgive the Delinquences of our Neighbours, as we hope to receive a Remission of our Trespasses committed against the Supreme Judge and Father of us all: For after the Execution of true Judgment, we are admonished for to shew Mercy.

Amongst the Heathens, the great *Alexander* is reported to have taken greater delight in Pardoning than Punishing an Offender. When *Bias* came to the Condemning of a Man he wept; and *Cicero* professed, *Cum parcere vel ledere potuissem*

issem, ignoscende quæ tantum causas, non puniendi occasiones; but to induce us by a greater Authority, God Almighty is our President, and he is stiled *Merciful and Long-suffering*, and we by our Lord's Command should be the like, *Be you Merciful as your Heavenly Father is Merciful*: And he adds thereunto a Benediction, *Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy*.

Let us therefore make no Separation between *Justice* and *Mercy*, but execute both truly: Let us be blind to insinuating Impostors, and deaf to palliating Flatterers; it were better to want Sense, than to judge an unrighteous Judgment, either erring against Justice or Mercy.

God required of the *Jews*, as a Demonstration
Isa. 58. 6, 7. of their Repentance, *To loose the Bands of Wickedness, to undo the heavy Burdens, and to let the Oppressed go free, and that they should break every Yoke, to deal their Bread to the Hungry, and to bring the Poor that are cast out to their Houses, and when they saw the Naked that they cover them, and that they should not hide themselves from their own Flesh.*

Afflict not the Poor, was the Precept of an ancient Philosopher; and suitably the Prophet in the Text excites Mankind by way of Prohibition, not to oppress any Subject to Oppression; *the Widow, nor the Fatherless; the Stranger, nor the Poor; and let none of you imagine Evil against his Brother in your heart.*

The Sin of Oppression in former times was expiated by Death or Banishment, as may be seen

by

by some Edicts of our ancient Kings. It was condemned of old by the Prophet *Amos*, *Woe to them that make the Ephah small, but the Shekel great*; to oppose the Oppression of the Widow, let there be the Love of an Husband; of an Orphan, let there be the Affection of a Father; of a Stranger, let there be the Hospitality of *Abraham*; of the Poor, let there be the Charity of *Job*, He *delivered the Poor that cried, the Fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The Blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him. And he caused the Widows heart to sing for joy. He put on Righteousness, and it clothed him, and Judgment was to him as a Robe and a Diadem. He was Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame. He was a Father to the Poor, and the cause which he knew not, he searched out. Then he brake the Jaws of the Wicked, and plucked the Spoil out of his Teeth. Then was his Glory fresh in him, and his Bow was renewed in his hand.* He relieved the Necessities of distressed Widowhood, and was a Father to the distressed Orphans. Job 29.12, &c.

As we hear the Complaints and Cries of others that are overwhelmed with Calamities, so God will hear us, and as we behold them, so will he behold us. Therefore stop not your Ears at the Cry of the Poor, for whose doth, he himself also shall cry aloud, and not be heard.

The Prophet *Isaiah* pronounceth *Woe unto them that decree unrighteous Decrees, and write grievousness which they have prescribed. To rob from the Needy from Judgment, and to take away Right from the* Isa. 10. 1, 2, 3.

Poor

Poor of their People, that Widows may be their Prey; and that they may rob the Fatherless. What will they do in the day of Visitation, and in the Desolation that shall come from far? To whom can they flee for help? and where will they leave their Glory?

The Prophet *Micah*, Chap. 2. Ver. 1, 2, 3. denounceth *Woe against them that practice Mischief as often as it is in the power of their hands; That covet Fields, and take them by force; and Houses, and take them violently. Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, against the Family that doth oppress a Man and his House, do I devise an evil, from which they shall not remove their Necks.* The Redeemer of the Poor and Afflicted is Mighty, and he will plead their Cause with their Oppressors. *Cursed* (saith the great Law-giver) *be he that perverteth the Judgment of the Stranger, Fatherless and Widow, and all the People shall say, Amen.* And this is repeated upon solemnest time (in the Commination) by the constant Practice of our Church. Oppress not a Stranger, injure him not by Word of Deed, neither secretly by Fraud, nor openly by Violence; but instead of Injury shew Kindness: We may learn a President from the *Israelites* who were Strangers and Bond-slaves in *Egypt*, they did feel by Experience, what it was for to vex Strangers cruelly, and learnt by that Experience (and by God's especial Command) to have Compassion upon others.

Besides, there are many Reasons why Strangers should be respected, Men of every Nation, Language and Country, have originally one common Father,

Father, and have the Stamp of the same Omnipotency upon them.

The next kind of Oppression is of the Widow and Fatherless; as we are to shew Pitty and Compassion to Strangers that are in Misery, so we are also to shew Pitty to them that are in Misery which are no Strangers, as Widows and Orphans. As we must not turn aside the Stranger from his Right, neither must we the Widow or the Fatherless; if Men regard not their Tears, their God will; and whom they Contemn, he will Favour; though none at all are to be wronged and afflicted, yet these especially must not be hurt, *Quia defensorem non habent* (saith good St. *Chrysostom*) the one wanteth a Father, and the other an Husband.

Oppress not the Poor (saith the Text) in general; the Poor are commonly oppressed by Extortion in Usury; this is not felt much in the beginning, but at the last, *Devorat ritam hominis substantiam*, these Extortioners live upon the Poor, and eat them up by their Severities, like Savage Beasts, by biting of others they feed themselves; the Men I speak of, are such as make an unreasonable and illegal Gain of Money, catching at the present Necessity of others.

These Men consider not, that they are *not to oppress the Widow, nor the Fatherless, the Stranger, nor the Poor.*

Oppress not, out of these Prohibitions, we must look to do their contraries; since *the Lord of Hosts*

in the Text, hath commanded us for to *shew Compassion every Man to his Brother, and that none of us should imagine Evil against his Brother in his heart.*

In the Text (you have seen) there are four Precepts, two Imperative, and two Prohibitive: The first two, of *Judgment* and *Mercy*; the second, of *Oppression* and *Malice*.

The Imperative Precepts are, *Execute true Judgment, and shew Mercy and Compassion every Man to his Brother.*

The Prohibitive Precepts, *Oppress not the Widow, nor the Fatherless, the Stranger, nor the Poor, and let none of you imagine evil against his Brother in your heart.*

The Author of them both is God, *Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying.*

I have finished all the Parts, except the very last, which prohibits Malice; *And let none of you imagine Evil against his Brother in your heart.*

I shall for order sake (now in the Conclusion) speak of this branch of the Text, and somewhat the more largely, because it is to be presumed, that Insolence and crossness of Temper brings many Persons hither; and that their Prosecutions are rather the Effects of Malice, than Desires of Right; such Mens impertinent, but evil and mischievous Imaginations, give unnecessary Trouble to the Court and Country, and deserve the Magi-

ſtrates Reproofs, and to meet with Deriſion and Diſappointment from all men.

As the Heart is the beginning of Life, and the Elaboratory of the vital Spirits, ſo it is the Magazine and Store-houſe of Humane Cogitations whither good or bad, and whereon, as upon an Anvil, are forged thoſe Thoughts which the Tongue its Inſtrument brings to light; for ſo our Bleſſed Lord informs us, That *out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth ſpeaketh. A good Man out of the good Treaſure of the Heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil Man out of the evil Treaſure, bringeth forth evil things. Out of the Heart* (ſaith our Lord) *proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, Fornications, Thefts, Falſe-witneſs, Blaſphemies*; therefore the Holy Prophet ſhut up his Exhortation with a Prohibition from ſuch Offences, nominating the place wherein they have reſidence, *and let none of you imagine evil againſt his Brother in your heart.* Matt. 12. 34.

Here obſerve firſt, The Offence and Imagination of Evil made apparent by Blaſphemy, Envy, Calumny, Revenge, Falſe-witneſs, Murder.

Secondly, The Reſidence of that Evil, in the Heart, *let none of you imagine evil againſt his Brother in your heart.*

'Tis a Negative Precept, whereby we are here firſt, and by St. *Paul* afterwards, commanded to abſtain from all appearances of Evil; here from evil Thoughts, there from evil Actions; for ſeldom doth

doth a perverse Imagination set a Brood, but it hatcheth some dismal Exploit.

Thus he that gives himself to imagine Evil, will at last proceed to give False-witness; first privately, and then publickly in Judgment; and in Judicial Acts this is diversly committed:

First, By the false and unjust Accuser; and therefore the Law admonisheth, *Lev.* 19. *Thou shalt not stand against the Blood of thy Neighbour, thou shalt not accuse him wrongfully, and bring his Life in danger.*

Secondly, By the Magistrate who pronounceth an indirect Sentence.

Thirdly, By corrupt Advocates that patronize false Titles, as *Tertullus* abused his Eloquence in disgracing St. *Paul*, *Acts* 24. any way to be a False Witness, is a grievous thing; he commits Sin in the Violation of Justice, and by Lying and Perjury; in every false Testimony a Man Sins against God, oppresseth the Innocent, and condemneth his own Soul. For False-witness, the Punishment by the Law of God was Retaliation: *If the witness be a False-witness, and shall testifie falsly against his Brother; then shall you do unto him, as he thought to have done unto his Brother*, Deut. 19. 18, 19.

So *Haman* was justly hanged on the same Gibbet that he had set up for *Mordecai*; and *Daniel*'s Accusers were cast into the Lion's Den, whither he was before condemned. False Witnesses were by the Edict of the ancient *Romans*, thrown down as Malefactors from the *Tarpeian-hill*.

This

This Malady hath its original in the Heart of Man, but the Searcher of Hearts can find all out, there is no dissembling with him that knows the very Thoughts thereof. Though *Joshua* could not, yet God can immediately see through the most curious Umbrages and lying Testimonials which the most Politick *Gibeonites* can invent, though Falsities were never so cunningly couched, he will find them out, though a *French* Tongue conspired with a *Spanish* Arrogance to frame a Greekish Lye.

Therefore God will avenge the Hurt that we do to an Innocent Neighbour, if we Blaspheme him either in Name, or in Person, as *Jezebel* procured *Naboth* to be thought a Blasphemer of God and the King, and thereupon had him Murthered: Of this sort of Calumny or Backbiting there are four kinds.

First, Men begin with Evil Suspicions, of which *Eliab* was guilty, when he said to his Brother *David*, *I know thy Pride, and the Naughtiness of thy Heart, for thou art come down that thou mightest see the Battel.* 1 Sam. 17. 28.

Secondly, They proceed therein, having itching Ears ready and open to receive Detractions; such were *Saul's*, who leaned to those Promoters that informed against *David*, till *David* demonstrated them to be false Men, by his sparing of *Saul's* Life in the Cave at *Engaddi*.

The third procedure in this Vice, is by Rashness in Judging; but this our Lord forbids in these pregnant words, *Judge not, and you shall not be judged.*

And

And this Evil is finished by a continual but an unhappy Inclination or malicious Desire of Back-biting, the Laws utterly forbids this, *Lev.* 19. 16. *Thou shalt not go up and down as a Tale-bearer amongst thy People*: These being the most Pestilent sort of Vagabonds, should be whip'd from every House.

He that Back-bites his Neighbour, hath Satan in his Mouth; he that hears the Calumny, hath him in his Ear; and he that believes it, hath him in his Heart, having cast out Charity, which is the Bond of Peace.

The Punishment that the Witty Comedian alots them is, That all Libellers should hang the Hearers by the Ears, and the Detractors by the Tongues. To credit False Reports and Seditious News, is a sign of malevolent Manners, or of childish Conditions: And therefore the Philosopher being asked what Beast did bite the soarest, answered, Of wild Beasts, a Detractor; and of tame, a Flatterer.

Therefore hath our Great God forbidden all evil Surmises; yet having an Eye to our Frailty, he would stint us betimes, lest we should proceed to wicked Practices; therefore he stops the next Issue of an evil Heart, saying, *Thou shalt not bear False-witness against thy Neighbour*; forewarning us against all Untruths and false Evidences. We must not admit of evil Thoughts, for these are the first Acters of our Brothers Tragedy, for out of the Heart proceed evil Thoughts, False-witness, Murthers, &c. Here the Scene of bloody

Thoughts

Thoughts is finished; for Murther is either Internal or External; the Internal likewise is Twofold, either conceived, as in Anger, Hatred, Desire of Revenge; or else permitted by consenting to another Man's Death, *Who knowing the Judgment of God, (that they who do such things are worthy of death) not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them*, Rom. 1. 32.

The External is actually committed by hand, as Wounding, and so consequently Slaying; by the Mouth, as Reviling, and giving Pernicious Counsel; by Help, as administring Aid, and so being accessory to the Murther: This External Murther is either uttered in Words, attempted in Gestures, or perpetrated in Deed.

There is an External Act of Murther likewise forbidden, that is committed by hasty Rage, Malice, Envy, &c.

The Law of God is spiritual, and therefore intends not only the Hands and Tongue, but the Heart and Affections also: As our blessed Saviour, the best Interpreter of the Law teacheth; He that is angry with his Brother without a cause, in respect of his own Will and Purpose, hath committed Man-slaughter; and therefore the Apostle saith, *He that hateth his Brother is a Man-slayer*, 1. John 3. 15.

A good Physician doth not only take away the Evil that is apparent, but also removes the very Root of the Disease; therefore our blessed Saviour not only forbids to take heed of Murther, but of

Anger

Anger also; for Homicide and Murther are engendered by Anger and Rage.

You have now heard the Effects which an Evil Heart doth produce, the Inconveniencies that it ensnares the Soul of Man with, let none of us therefore be so defrauded and seduced, but rather to *Execute true Judgment, and shew Mercy and Compassion every Man to his Brother; and oppress not the Widow, nor the Fatherless, the Stranger, nor the Poor, and let none of you imagine evil against his Brother in your Heart.*

That none of these Evils may be countenanced, the Laws of God and of this Realm have constituted Judges and Officers to observe, and to forbid and punish them.

And it did please Almighty God, to set before us the very Model of executing Justice, by sending his great Officers upon the place to make their Inquest; (which Method our Wise Laws have therefore espoused,) and my Lords the King's Judges pursue it now in their several Circuits. 'Tis in 1 *Sam.* 7. 15, 16, 17. *And* Samuel *judged* Israel *all the days of his Life. And he went from year to year in Circuit to* Bethel, *and* Gilgal, *and* Mizpeh, *and judged* Israel *in all those places. And his return was to* Ramah, *for there was his House, and there he judged* Israel, *and there he built an Altar unto the Lord.*

Samuel began at *Bethel* where was the House of God, and at the finishing of his Circuit at *Ramah*

Ramah or built an Altar and praised God (which is the Foundation of this Honourable and Solemn Audience, before which I having made such suitable Observations (upon the Text) as the time and the publick Affairs will admit of.

I will close up all with a very few words of general Advice, and publick Exhortation, desiring every Person in this great Assembly, seriously to consider, as it becomes them in their Allegiance, That as on the one side the King's Majesty hath ended the late War gloriously, and is raising a solid and defensive Superstructure upon the Foundation of the Peace: So the late unparallell'd Parliament (that Phenix-like can only arise again out of its own Ashes of Dissolution) hath gratefully and honourably provided for the King's Support, that he may enjoy the compleat Lustre and Repose of his Successes. And indeed, they that were not Zealous to Support our King, might justly have been suspected to be in Pension with a Forreign King.

Our Dangers disappear and vanish, and our Charges will begin to lessen, which though for many Years they have been great, yet were they our very Security.

Since therefore our publick Charges, as well as our publick Hazards, will decline together, (unless evil and foolish Men, by clamouring unseasonably against them, entail them upon themselves and

us too) Let us unite in a mity and Friendſhip, and forget all Names of Diſtinction, and decline all pedvilh and clandeſtine Projects one againſt another. Then aſſuredly will our Enemies be weakned and infatuated by our Reconciliation, and our own Intereſts be ſtrengthned and eſtabliſhed; So that every one may ſay with Holy *David*:

Behold! How good and joyful a thing it is, for Brethren to dwell together in Unity.

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